

A  
S E R M O N  
Preached before the  
K I N G  
A T  
CHESTER,  
O N  
AUGUST xxviii. 1687.  
Being the F E A S T of  
S. A U G U S T I N,  
Doctor of the Holy  
Catholic Church.

By the Reverend Father, L E W I S S A B R A N, of the  
Society of Jesus.

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Published by His Majesties Command.

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L O N D O N:

Printed by *Henry Hills*, Printer to the King's Most Excellent Majesty,  
for his Household and Chappel; and are to be sold at his Printing-  
House on the Ditch side, in *Black-Fryers*. 1687.

W. D. M. G.

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## 2 T I M. IV. vii.

Bonum certamen certavi, cursum consummavi, fidem servavi.

*I have fought a good Fight, consummated my Race, kept my Faith.*



His Character, Most Sacred Majesty, of an undaunted and unwearied Courage, meeting Victory at last through all the Oppositions weak Nature can dread, and faint under; of a steddy and unalterable fixture in the Resolution once taken of serving God; of an even and punctual Fidelity to his holy Grace; as it is the noblest, so certainly it doth but Justice either to the great Apostle S. Paul, or to the great Doctor S. Augustin, whose Feast the holy Catholic Church solemnizes this day: since 'tis given to the first by the Holy Ghost, moving his Pen, when he writ it, against all the Opposition his Humility could make; And applied to the second by that Church, which is ever guided by the same unerring Holy Spirit. 'Tis no wonder one Character should serve them both, the one having been so exact a Copy of the other. Nature had with an equally liberal Hand richly qualified both; Education had refined their eminent Parts, by an equally deep Knowledge in all Human Literature; they oppos'd alike the Church of God, the one with the Sword of Persecution, the other with his sharper and more dreadful Logic; both

mif-led by a blind and stormy Zeal, which yet argued their Abilities, though misapplyed. Their Conversion was the immediate Work of Heaven, both being retrieved by its miraculous Voice ; their Learning inspired by the same Spirit ( though not in a like Degree of Certainty ) guided all Christian Divines in the Schools ; by their Tongues the Spirit of God spoke most efficaciously in their respective Ages, from the Pulpit ; their Writings have disarmed all Heretics and Schismatics that ever opposed the Church to this Day ; by their Apostolical Labors they outwent so far all those of their different Ranks, that each could say with a just Title, I have laboured more than all ; a Love of God frequently heightened into Raps and Extasies, equally inflamed both : They both had a Foretaste here below of Heavenly Bliss ; in a Word, They were first the most absolute miraculous Conquerors, and then the most victorious Champions of the Grace of God. That I may the better set out S. Augustin in both these Capacities, to Gods greater Glory in him, and to your larger Spiritual Comfort and Benefit (Christian Auditors) joyn, I crave, your Prayers with mine to obtain the Succor of that Divine Grace : If I presume not to present them, without taking along the joyn't Intercession of the Mother of God, I follow there, in the Advice of S. Augustin, which I address to you in his Words ; Let us by the most tender Application of our whole Heart, recommend our selves to the most Blessed Virgin's Intercession ; let us all, with the greatest eagerness, strive to obtain her Protection ; that whilst with Affiduity we pay her our Devotions on Earth, she may interreat for us in Heaven by her earnest Prayers ; for undoubtedly she who brought forth the Price of Redemption, hath the greatest Right to intercede for those who are redeemed.

Toto mensis affec-  
tu bratissime  
virginis  
nos interces-  
sionibus commi-  
tamus. &c. Serm.  
35 de Sanc.

Ave

## Ave Maria.

**L**est the Offers I seem to make at a Panegyric, should dull the Attention of any in my Auditory, led by that common Apprehension, Either that Sermons of Saints are like their vulgar Pictures which bear their Names indeed, and some Symbols of them, but have in Lieu of their proper natural Features, such only as are borrowed from the Painters Fancy; or that such sublime Virtues only and rare Gifts of God are treated of in them, as lying far out of the Road and Reach of most Christians, are of little Use for their Instruction and Edification: to correct, I say, a Mistake that would so far prejudice, and even defeat my whole Design, give me Leave first to protest, That I will not in this Discourse even hint at any thing concerning this Saint, but what he owns of himself in his Writings: His Humility having prompted him to lay open all his Faults and Weakness in some of them; and in others, that Seraphic Love which ever moved his Heart to a grateful Return of Thanks, having often unwarily betrayed what singular Graces and Gifts he possest, *That the Mercy and Justice de bonis meis, &*  
*of God might receive due Praise, and Mens Minds and de malis meis*  
*Hearts be raised to give it, by the Knowldg of Gods Deum laudant,*  
*Favors and of his Sins.* *Again, the only Mark I level at, bonum & justum,*  
 being Gods greater Glory in this his Saint, *the Fight and atque in eum ex-*  
*Victory I mean to speak of, is of the Divine Mercy citant humanum*  
*and Grace, setting his Free-will in that happy Liber intellectum & af-*  
*erty of the Children of God, conquering in and with featum 4.2. retract.*  
*it; of that Divine Virtue which borrows its greatest c. 6.*  
*Lustre from human Weakness and Corruption.* All Non ego sed  
 therefore that I shall offer to your Attention will serve gratia Dei mecum.

on

on those strange Oppositions which this blessed Saint before his Conversion raised within himself against that Grace which called him to the true Church, and to an eminent degree of Piety in it, I hope it will contribute the more to my Auditories Instruction and Comfort; for as the Saint himself teaches me, *Health Creates a greater Joy when restored after a desperate Disease, and Safety when it succeeds the most pressing Dangers.* — God himself is represented rejoicing more at the Conversion of one Sinner, than for the perseverance of Ninety Nine Just: — And if any part of Holy Writ draws Tears of sensible Comfort from our Eyes, and softens our Hearts with a feeling Tenderness, 'tis when we read the solemn Feast in the House of that merciful Father at the Return of his untoward Prodigal Child, who had perisht, and was now found, had been dead, and was now revived. S. Augustin till the Age of Thirty Four Years, was out of the true Church, and Favor of God, plung'd into Heresie and Vice. The haughty Perverseenes of his Understanding swell'd up with the proud Conceit of his own Parts, oppoſed it ſelf to Gods Grace, offering the Light of a true Faith: Worldly Interest, and the Corruption of his Heart swayed by vicious Inclinations, withſtood the fame Grace, offering the true Comforts of Vertue and Piety; Grace conquered at laſt, joyned with his Free-will, and ſo poſteſt the whole Soul of *Augustin*, that he continued an even Course of Vertue the reſt of his Life, by being Faithful to the conquering Grace he had yielded himſelf unto. These two Victories of Gods Grace, bringing *Augustin's* Understanding and Heart to a due Submission and conſtant Fidelity, whereby he hath a juſt Claim to my Text; are the two Points of this Discourse, and of Your Royal Majesties moſt gracious Attention. That true Religion, or the Worſhip which God requires at our Hand, is ſufficiently revealed to all Mankind, by him who is the Light that enlightens each Man that comes into this World; that

that the true Churches Voice, which all are bound to hear-  
ken unto, and obey, may easily be heard, and distinguis-  
hed; that the House of God, in which alone those Sa-  
craments are dispensed, which convey to us a plen-  
tiful Redemption, and work together with us our Sal-  
vation, is like a City seated on a Hill, exposed to the  
View of all; that the Way which God hath markt  
us out to walk in towards Heaven, is easily found out,  
and followed, so that Fools shall not go astray in it,<sup>Ex. 33.</sup>  
and consequently is discernible by its Infallible Secu-  
rity; are Truths which Faith teaches us, and even  
Reason evinces to any who shall acknowledg in God a  
Providence and a merciful Goodnes. How then be-  
falls it, that so many wander in Darkness though sur-  
rounded by that Light, fail to hear this Churches  
Voice, misse to see this City, err in finding this way?  
But how could this happen to an *Augustin*, so that  
for Twenty Years he should persevere in an Heresie  
the most wicked and senseless, that ever infected Man-  
kind? Some you will say are strangely dull, especially  
in the Concerns of Piety. True, but as the learned  
World hath ever owned, he had so soaring and search-  
ing an Understanding, that Heaven never gave so sub-  
lime a Wit to any Mortal before, seeming to exhaust  
it's Treasury in enriching his Mind, Nature at least  
emptied herself in perfecting him. So few cultivate their  
Wit by Studies! I allow it; but whose was ever po-  
lished with such Industry, improved with such Dili-  
gence as S. *Augustins*? "What did it avail me, saith  
he of himself, "that I read and without the help of  
"a Master understood all the Books that treated  
"of Liberal Sciences, whilst I remained a dull Slave  
"to my vicious Inclinations? My Back was turned to  
"the true Light, I read by it other things, but ne-  
"ver cast back my Eyes to fix them on it. I had a  
"quick and sharp Wit; it was your Gift my God, but  
"I sacrificed no Share of it to you; it was a part of  
"my Misery that I like the prodigal Child had in my  
"own

Scientiam Augu-  
stino calum dedic-  
super  
omnes homines,  
&c. Avicen.  
Ecclise naturam  
extremum effe-  
ctum sue potentie.  
dum *Augustinis*-  
num creavit  
Ingenium. Alb.  
mag.  
Confess. I. 4.c.16.

" own Hands and proper Disposal, that rich Portion  
" of my Inheritance, whilst I used not those Abilities  
" in your Service, but withdrew from you my  
" God into a foreign Land. Possibly being born and  
bred up in Error, he met with none that could lay  
it open to him: On the contrary, he was born of a  
most pious Catholic Mother, he had felt in his Youth  
most pressing Inclinations to Piety, he had since heard  
the ablest Divines of Gods Church in *Africa and Italy*.  
Perhaps he was little concerned to find out the Truth,  
and little regarded the Proofs of it that were offered  
him: he assures us that for Eleven years at least, he  
burnt with an incredible Desire of the Knowledge of  
Eternal Truth, which during that Time buoyed him up  
and raised him toward the God he sought. That he  
eagerly wished for Wings to quit this World, and  
soar to that true Wisdom which dwells only in God,  
All this perchance was only a vain Curiosity in one,  
who felt no Sense of Piety, no Spark of Devotion:

*Immortalitatem  
sapientiae concu-  
piscientiam setu-  
cordis incredibili-*

*l. conf. 1. 3. c. 4.*

*Ibidem.*

*Confel. 1. 3. c. 5.*

" My Heart, says he, had suckt in with my Mothers  
" Milk, a tender Devotion for the Name of my Re-  
" deemer, it had sunk deeply there, what ever I read  
" of the Name of Jesus was not set in it, how smooth  
" and learned it ever were, seemed insipid and relish-  
" ed not. It may be that he refused to use Means pro-  
portioned to the finding of the Truth: No, he neg-  
lected but one, he used all the rest. If reading be  
useful to that End, he left no Book unread; if con-  
sulting private Men, he dealt with the most eminent of  
all persuasions, and was deceived by some who had  
always in their Mouths *the Lord, the Spirit, the Truth*:  
" Such were their Words, says he, but their Heart  
" was empty; my Soul did inwardly sigh to thee my  
" God, whilst they deceived me with an Empty Sound of  
" thy Name.— Unhappy me, by what large Steps did  
" I sink into the depth of Hell! But sure he read not  
the Holy Text of Scripture: He did, but to little  
Purpose, *Bebold*, says he, *I saw there something covered*

*and*

and vailed to the Proud, and not open, not naked to Children: Low in appearance, but that soared high, and was wrapped up in Mysteries: The Light it gave, might have increased and grown with a little one, but I disdained to be a little One: That is, I scorned to be taught my Book, to hear any Interpreter of it. Blessed God! such Parts employed! such Means used! so long a Search so studiously continued! and discovered he not the true Religion? So far from it, that he acknowledges he came to be of no Religion, and even to doubt whether God had assigned any Way to eternal Life, which could be found out. Were it possible to discover what blockt up his Way in the search after Truth? I observe in him three Letts that perfectly obstructed it. First, He was prepossest with a fixed Perswasion, L. 4. Conf. c. 10.  
 That the Catholic Church had erred. He began to & 11.  
 suspect, and even to hate the Heretics, of whose Congregation he was; yet they being many, their Multitude retarded his Diligence in enquiring farther, *Because he despaired that Truth could be found in your Church, O Lord of Heaven and Earth.* Such was the Aversion from it they had prevented him with. You brought me to Ambrose without any Knowledg in me of your Design, says he, which was, that by true Knowledg he might bring me to you; I loved and valued him, but not as a Teacher of Truth; for I despaired of finding any such in your Church. Secondly, Besides that general Prejudice he nourisht, he misrepresented to himself the particular Tenets of the Church, and then hated and reviled the ugly Idol of his own carving. If ever, saith he, my Soul lifted up and moved her self towards the Catholic Faith, I was soon driven back; for alas! Catholic Faith was not that which I took it to be. Thirdly, He was willing to be convinced, but not to believe; to see, but not to submit his Understanding to Faith: He sought a clear Evidence, and such as should not controul his usual Apprehension, or oppose his Senses, as if they had been fit Judges of the Objects of Faith, revealed Truths.

Exe video secum  
non compertam  
superbis, neque  
audaram pueris,  
sed inceps humi-  
lcam insuffici ex-  
cellamque velutam  
mysteriis, &c.  
ibidem.

Inveniri posse  
viam vice minime  
parabam. Conf. 1.6  
c. 1.

Valendo anima  
mea quia utique  
nisi credendo ia-  
mari non poterat;  
ne falsa crederet  
sinari recusabat,  
*etc. Conf. 1.6. c. 1.*

*My sick Soul, says he, could not be cured but by Belie-  
ving, and for fear of being surprized, and made to believe  
what might be false, I refused to admit of a Cure; I was  
resolved either to see things, or if I could not, to conceive  
them as evidently as that Seven and Three make up Ten. It*

Quid sum ego  
mihi sine te nisi  
dux in præcep., &  
quis homo est  
quilibet homo  
cum sit homo!  
*Conf. 1.6. c. 4.*

It was on these his Three mistaken Methods that he re-  
flected afterwards, when sighing he said, *What am I  
to my self but a Guide leading into a Precipice? What a  
sad Man, is each Man, when he is but one Man? That  
is, when he is left to his own Private Sense, abandon-  
ed to his own Judgment. Was it possible that Gods  
Grace, had it been less than Omnipotent, should pre-  
vail against these stubborn Ill-dispositions of his Mind?  
Long was the Combat, violent the Strife, but Grace  
conquered at last, and by this Method gained the Field.  
*First*, God by a particular Light convinced him, That  
Religion was not Opinion, but Faith; not a calling  
of things Divine to the Test of our weak Judgment,  
and carnal Senses; but a captivating of our Under-  
standing, and humbly sacrificing it to the Divine Truth.  
*Next*, he observed how numerable those things were,  
which he believed, though he had never seen them;  
How he had ever adored God, and owned his Prov-  
idence, though he knew not what a Kind of Substance  
he was, nor what Way led unto or from him. *I  
thought on these Things, says he, and you were present  
to me, I was carried away by restless Waves, and you  
governed and steered my Course, I sighed, and you heard  
me. Then he resolves to seek more narrowly:* “Let  
“Time be assigned, says he, let some Hours be al-  
“otted to the Study of that great Science, How I  
“shall save my Soul. Let all Vain and Empty Con-  
“cerns perish, and all my Thoughts and Endeavors be  
“spent in the sole Pursuit of Truth; this Life at best  
“is but Toysome and Miserable, Death certain and at  
“Hand, if it surprizes whither do we go? He present-  
ly applyed himself seriously to an humble Search after  
a Guide to Truth; when favoured with a new Light  
from*

*Hildeg. c. 11.*

from Heaven, he cryes out, *Conceive better Hopes my Soul, the Catholic Faith doth not teach what we Believe, and fondly accused her of.* Thus disposed, and weighing with a due Attention the Articles of the Catholic Belief, he owns his Heart was filled with Joy, and his Face covered with Shame, to see how profanely he had strove so many Years, not against Catholic Faith, as he conceived, but against his own Dreams, how Rash he had been, and equally Impious: *That whereas he should with Submission have learnt from the Church, that which she held, he fastened on her what he pleased, and accused her of it.* He reads next Holy Scripture, with the due deference he owed to that Churches Interpretation, owning there is no Text of Scripture into which a false Glos may not Foist an Error; that the Letter ever kills, when severed from the Spirit which ought to quicken; that the very misapplying a Text, otherwise truly Interpreted, is the most dangerous Weapon that a tempting Devil could use, to deceive, even if possible, Truth it self, with an *It is written*; that stubbornly to maintain our own Fancy to be the Word of God, because we uphold it by a forced Text, is to set up the greatest Abomination of Desolation in the House of God, an Idol upon his Altar; and to adore it by the worst of Idolatries, Self-worship; proudly challenging as our own, what Christ only could bequeath, and left to his Church, to each Member as united to the whole, the Spirit of Truth, who alone must Interpret what he Dictated alone: On which score Christ left as a *Depositorum* in the same Hands of the Church, the Letter and the Spirit, the Book and the Sense, the Word and the Truth, to be delivered to all succeeding Ages by the same Authority, because the separating of the one from the other, would turn the most whollom Food of our Souls to present Poison; whence Heresies have had their birth, from good Scriptures ill understood, and from the bold and rash asserting of such Errors. So that this only is the holy Method to be followed, that what we find in Scripture conformable

Eo quippe temerarius & impius fueram, quod ea qua debet querenda disere, acutando dixeram. l. 6. Conf.

Nulla scriptura est qua non apud illos qui eam non intelligunt, possit reprehendi. l. 1. de gen. contra Manic.

Neque enim nata sunt haereses nisi dum scripturae bona intelliguntur non bene, & quod in iis non bene intelliguntur etiam temere & audacter assertur. Tract. 18. in Jo.

formable with the Faith we have received, we feed on it; but when any part thereof appears not uniform with that Rule, that it create in us no Doubts, but only an humble persuasion that we understand not yet such a Scripture. He had scarce receiv'd this Light, when behold all his Doubts raised before by the same Lecture, disappeared, all those seeming Contradictions vanished; whence he was perfectly convinced, that the Catholic Church was the unerring Guide to be followed by all the Disciples of Christ.

Quod secundum  
sanam fidei regn-  
lam intelligere  
non poterimus,  
dubitacionem au-  
feramus, intelli-  
gentiam dissera-  
mus. *Ibid.*

Allud est de fil-  
vestri cacumine  
videre patriam  
pacis, & iter ad  
eam non invenire  
& frumenta conscri-  
per invia: allud  
viam tenere illuc  
ducentem cura  
coelestis impera-  
toris munatum.  
*Conf. L. 8. c. 1.*

*L. b. 8. cap. 1.  
Conf.*

Catholica delici-  
etur Ecclesia &  
dicat ego dormio  
& cor meum vi-  
gilat. Quid est,  
nisi, ita quicco  
ut audiam.  
*Tract. 25. in Jo.*

ness of theirs injure them? Whilst they were carried in your Arms, and rested in the Nest of the Catholic Church, enlarging the Wings of their Charity, and strengthening them by the Food of a sound Faith; chosen for, and brought to them without their labor? Happy Men, who enjoy a perfect Rest, while their whole Duty is to hearken. Behold the final Victory of Grace over the Pride of Human Wit, captivated to Faith, our Self sufficiency humbled under the Tutoring Discipline and Direction of the Church. No wonder if this Saint afterwards us'd no other Method in reconciling misled Heretics to Truth, but that by which Gods Grace had retrieved him from his Errors, the infallible Authority of a Guiding Church. He advised Unlearned Men in general, to relie altogether, and lean on the Authority of the Church: He minded the most Learned,

who feared to be deceived, where Truth seemed to them  
but obscurely revealed, to consult the Church, which the  
holy Scriptures point out without ambiguity; assuring  
them, that (even in Fundamental Articles, of as immedi-  
ate necessity as Baptism is, where Scripture mentions no-  
thing thereof) *the very Truth of Scriptures is followed, whilst*  
*that is done which the Catholic Church declares for*, and with  
reason, since we receive, said he, the Books of the Old and  
New Testament in the same number that the Authority of Fo. 7. Il contra  
cresco. c. 33-i.  
the Catholic Church hath Sealed and Delivered up to us;  
since *I would not give any credit to the Gospel, if the Auto-*  
*rity of the Catholic Church moved me not to it: whatever*  
*Doubts there arise, not to yield to the Church, 'tis the utmost*  
*Impiety, the most loose Arrogancy:* “For whether in her  
“most general, necessary and first Principles, or in re-  
“moteſt Truths leading to ſolid Devotion; whether in  
“her Milk or in her Bread; the Church alone poſſeſſes  
“Truth. Those then who have their Belief yet to choose,  
“who begin a ſerious Search into Religion, desiring to Contra Faust.  
1. 15. c. 3. in.  
Fo. 6.  
De util. Cred.  
c. 7. & 8.  
know to which they are to commit their Souls for In-  
“ſtruction, they muſt, without any Doubt, begin with  
“the Catholic Church: If they have been wavering in  
“their Mind, and desire to put an end to their toil in  
“ſeeking, let them follow the Way of Catholic Disci-  
“pline, which as it is derived from Jesus Christ to us  
“by the Apostles, ſo muſt it be transmitted to our Poſſe-  
“ſity in ſucceeding Ages. We muſt receive our Faith  
from that Church, as the first converted to Christianity  
received it from the Apostles, and they from Christ. Her  
Authority being once established by the ſame Proofs which  
the Apostles offered for theirs, our whole Work is to em-  
brace what God teaches by her Voice, tho' it be above the  
level and reach of Human Reaſon: “For before our  
“Minds be cleared from that Dullneſs which Sin hath left  
“in it, that especially of Infidelity, we muſt believe what  
“we cannot yet understand, the Prophet having moſt truly  
“ſaid, *Without you believe, you ſhall not understand;* for  
“Faith is delivered in the Church in very few words, in  
“which Christus mira-  
lis conciliavit au-  
toritatem auto-  
ritate meruit fi-  
dem. De util.  
cred. c. 14.  
Domino coope-  
rante & fermi-  
hem conformatre  
ſequentibus fig-  
nis. Marc. ult.  
De agone Chrona.  
c. 13.

In Psalm.

In Psalm 130.

Psalm in part.  
Donati.

Ad Tit. 3. 10.

L. 2. con. Don.  
§ 5.

" which Eternal Mysteries are comprehended, which carnal man cannot yet conceive. The first Heresie arose amongst Christ's Disciples from the refusal of yielding to his words, which seemed hard, they unhappily made a Schism from him: If Peter stuck stedfast to Christ, was it by understanding the high Mysteries of that Speech of Christ? No; but he piously believed what he understood not: Learn, little ones of Christ, learn from hence due Piety; for those who will dispute of Mysteries they do not understand, do but heighten their Pride, whil'st that curse falls on them which the Royal Prophet speaks of in the 130 Psalm, If I was not humble of heart, but have swelled up my mind with Pride, as the Child weaned from the breast is towards his Mother, so be my Soul punished. The Church of God is that Mother from which they are severed; they should have been nurs'd and fed by her, and so might have grown and become capable of digesting the Word and Mysteries of Faith. Ponder then well the sense of those two words of your Creed, *Catholic Church*; observe what a certain death seizes the Vine-branch, how it withers when lopt off from the Body of the Vine; come and seek Life from the Root; number the Priests in St. Peter's Chair; observe how they have succeeded to one another: that's the Rock which the proud Gates of Hell never conquer. This was his method of reducing those better-disposed Souls which erred by mistake rather than by malice; but if he found any obdurate, before he shaked against them the dust of his feet, according to Christ's Command, before he avoided them as already condemned, following the Apostles Counsel; he with a true Charity, weeping for the certain danger they ran, minded them of it thus: *To be fond of ones proper Opinion, or to be averse from better, to that degree as to be guilty, by breaking Communion, of the Sacrilege of Schism or Heresie, is a Presumption beyond all others, but the Devils;* since it is to refuse a Submission to the Spirit of Truth, guiding that Church it is promised unto, and which God commands all to hearken

hearken unto, and to obey. 'Tis the Crime of *Corah*,  
 erecting an Altar against an Altar, which involves the  
 weak and ignorant Followers as much as the Leaders,  
 when equally stubborn in standing to their Separation ;  
 it seeming even a higher Crime in unlearned men, who  
 pretend not to extraordinary Parts, and yet presume  
 to be Judges of, and to condemn the Universal Church,  
 preferring to her Decisions the opposite Errors of a few  
 of her revolted Children. I do not despair of the Salvation  
 of any one in particular, whether he be a great Sinner in the  
 Church, or a Schismatic out of it. Judgment is reserved  
 to God alone ; he only who hath in his hands the Iron  
 Rod, can break the Earthen Vessels : but I equally de-  
 clare of both, with the Apostle, That neither those who  
 in the true Church die in sin, nor those who through a  
 stiff stubbornnes die out of her Communion, shall be saved:  
 "For whoever shall be found out of it, will be an Alien,  
 "not reckoned amongst the Children of God, whom he  
 "shall not have for Father, having refused to have the  
 "Church for his Mother. That Catholic Church which  
 "only is the Body of Christ, of which He is the  
 "Head, whereof He alone is the Savior ; out of that  
 "Body no one receives Life from God's Holy Spirit, nor  
 "consequently can pretend to an Eternal one. Out of  
 "this Churches Unity no one can attain to true Penance ; no  
 "one can obtain remission of sins, (her Children alone  
 "being the sole Dispensers of the Mysteries of God.) In  
 "Her House only the Lamb is eaten ; that is, on Her  
 "Altars only is sacrificed the true Victim of our Redeem-  
 "er, (which alone so applies to us the saving Sacrifice of  
 "the Cross, that who eats not of that Flesh hath no Life  
 "in him.) As then no one escaped the Deluge, who was not  
 "in Noah's Ark, so no one shall be saved, who is not a  
 "Member of the Church, out of which an Heretic may  
 "have all things but Salvation : He may have the Sacra-  
 "ments, he may keep the Gospel, he may have the Faith,  
 "and preach it, only Salvation he cannot have. Tho'  
 "he be a Paul converted by God's Voice, instructed from  
 "Heaven,

L. de Bapt. con.  
Donat. c. 16.  
L. 2. contra c. 23.

De symb. ad Cris-  
tichum. c. 10.

Tract. 32. sup.  
Joan.  
Saluator corporis  
sui.  
L. de verâ & fall.  
poen. c. 12.

Ser. 181. de tem-  
pore.

Q. Q. 75. ad  
ora. Q. 52.  
Contra Petili, ut  
supra.

"Heaven, he must first be sent to those who can administer to him the Sacraments, and enter him a Member into the Church's Body. Tho' he be a pious *Cornelius*, "an Alms-giver, a man of Prayer, a sober Liver; tho' he have an Angel to instruct him, *Peter* must teach him, "and admit him into the Kingdom of God upon Earth, "of which he hath the Keys, (the Church) before he can be saved: otherwise, let him observe all the Commandments, live a chaste life to the purity of an entire Virginity, be profuse in Alms-giving, most patient in bearing with all Injuries; let him sell all, and give to the Poor, reserving nothing for himself: after all those seemingly laudable actions, yet if he be not of the true and Catholic Faith, when he departs this life he will meet a certain Damnation, altho' he should shed his Blood for the Name of Christ. Say not that *Cyprian* and his Church, because they condemned no man, and separated none from their Communion, were not Heretics, and that it may suffice you that you copy this Example: That was enough when the Church had not yet decided the Dispute, to whose Decision *Cyprian* had certainly submitted himself, and with her condemned all her Opposers, which you do not. Say not that you err in no Fundamentals; that you conceive it a thing indifferent unto what Party you joyn your selves, supposing they be Christians, and therefore remain fixed to that Party in which you were born: for whatsoever in particular the Opinions of Heretics and Schismatics be, since they profess otherwise than the Church does, and requires of them to do, they are in a state of Damnation, because they renounce thereby one fundamental Article of Faith, the Authority and Unity of the Catholic Church, in whose bosom Truth dwells. So that whosoever is removed from it, 'tis necessary that he be in Error. Say not, I am satisfied, my conscience doth not reproach me that I am in an Error. I am charitably persuaded others may also serve God well; but many Mysteries in the Catholic Church appearing to me very strange, how can I believe what

Ad Bonifacium  
cont. a. Ep. Pelag.

De fide ad Pet.  
c. 39.

Epistola 45. de  
Donatistis.

Serm. 14. de ver-  
bis Dom.

In Psal. 17. In  
venire Ecclesie  
veritatem,  
quisquis ab hoc  
separatus fuerit,  
neceps est ut falsa  
loquatur.

what I understand not? or how shall I, an unlearned person, ever satisfie my selfe of the Truth? 'Tis then better for me to live of that Religion my Father and Mother were of, and die in that Church which I was Christened in. Such weak reasons, which yet retain in Heresie the greatest part of those who are unhappily engaged in it, betray equally the weakness of their Judgment, and headstrong Stubbornness of their Will. The whole Catholic Church of all Ages, of all Nations, in her General Councils, rests satisfied of the Truth of each Article of Catholic Belief, so as to Curse and Excommunicate all those who believed as you do, in opposition to her. Now there is an ease and satisfaction which proceeds from Ignorance, (such as is in him who in a dark night walks without fear on the brim of a Precipice he knows nothing of) another from Knowledge; and can you think, without the highest Presumption, that Ignorance lay on the whole Church's side, and Science in your private Gift? Is it charity to think all those General Councils were most uncharitable, which all said *Anathema* to the Errors which they condemned, and you now approve? "True  
 "Faith involves Mysteries which usually scandalize ignorant Souls, and careless in seeking Instruction, that is,  
 "the greatest part of the World, because they can be  
 "plausibly argued against, but not so easily made clear, they  
 "would not otherwise be Mysteries of Faith. 'Tis then not  
 "only most to be counsell'd, to believe what you see not  
 "yet the reason of, since you acknowledge your self un-  
 "learned, ignorant, not able to judge in such Debates;  
 "and by Faith to manure your Soul, and to fit it to re-  
 "ceive and improve the seed of Truth: but 'tis so abso-  
 "lutely necessary, that by no other method health can be  
 "restored to a sick mind. Are you ignorant? not able by  
 "your own Judgment to determin on what side the Truth  
 lies? Why then 'tis evident that you are bound to leave  
 all thole Congregations which leave you to your own  
 final Decision, and to repair to that Church which alone  
 gives you an Infallible Guide. Think well of God's infinite

*sum ibi quædam  
 que subducere  
 animos f. natus &  
 negligentes ful.  
 que maxima me-  
 ba est; popula-  
 riter acutari pot-  
 ent, defendere  
 cent populariter,  
 propter mysteria  
 que his contine-  
 tur, non à multis  
 a modum pot-  
 ent. c. 2. de util.  
 cred.*

*Credere ante ra-  
 tione, cum perci-  
 piendæ rationi  
 non sis idoneus.  
 & ipsa si te exco-  
 lere animum ex-  
 cipiendo semini-  
 bus ventatis, non  
 solum aluberril-  
 um judico; sed  
 tale sine quo ægis  
 animis talis redi-  
 re non potest.*

None fit defraude  
dum ab eodem  
ipso Deo auctorita-  
tem aliquam  
conferuntam, qua  
velut certo gradu  
innitentes atcol-  
latur ad Deum.  
Epist. 56. Inmo-  
bili auctorati.

Vere illa rectifi-  
ma disciplina est  
in aciem fidei  
quam maxime  
recipi infirmos  
at pro illis jam  
fiduciam posuisse,  
signissima ratio-  
ne pugnauerat.

"mote mercy, and true desire that you should be saved,  
"and never despair to find an Authority established by God  
"himself, from which, as from a secure step, we may take  
"our rise to God. Heretics offer Reasons and Arguments  
"for proof of their Belief, and pretend by them to be  
"preferr'd to the unmoveable Authority of the Church, which  
"is so firmly established; therein lies the rashness com-  
"mon to all Heretics: But the most meek Lord of our  
"Faith hath been pleased to strengthen his Church with  
"an Authority far weightier than that of all others; into  
"this Castle of the Faith all the weaker ought to with-  
"draw themselves, whil'st for them, thus secure, others  
"fight with invincible Reasons and Proofs. You are  
willing to be guided by so weak an Authority as that of  
your Father and Mother; and will you refuse to be guided  
by the pious Examples of all their Ancestors, and of  
the whole Church for fourteen hundred years? As for  
your Baptism, in it you were christened a Catholic,  
whoever baptized you; and by declaring your self a  
Catholic, you restore your self to the Religion you  
were christened in: For the Catholic Church is like unto  
Paradise, the Waters of whose Fountain could be  
drunk out of it in the Rivers that streamed out; but that  
Baptism being given and belonging only to the Catholic  
Church, as in Paradise only could be enjoyed temporal hap-  
piness, so no one purchases or maintains a Right to eternal  
happiness out of that Church. Thus did this holy Saint  
endeavor to draw back to the true Church's Communion  
those more stubborn Heretics, creating in them that holy  
Fear of God, which is the beginning of Wisdom. Christian  
Brethren, you who are so happy as to have been born in,  
or early called to the Bosom of this holy Catholic Church,  
and thereby to enjoy that Blessing with less toil and labor  
than it cost S. Augustin; Be ever thankful for so great a  
Mercy; wonder not when you see knowing Men, sober  
Enquirers, who, even after a studious search, have so thick  
a Veil yet over their eyes, as not to see those glorious evi-  
dent Marks God hath distinguished this Church by, nor  
their

Salutem beatitudi-  
nis extra eam  
neminem vel per-  
cipere vel tenere.  
De bapt. con. Dom.  
1. 4. c. 2.

their Obligation of rendering themselves Members of it. For twenty years ~~Augustin~~, a man of far greater Parts, and a more diligent Scar her, was thus blind. Pity those who in their Faith on the Sleeve, bottom it on the Authority of some such particular men, whil'st they refuse to give ear to the whole Catholic Church, which assures them that they go astray. Pray for both, obtain a Ray of Grace for them, and they will see as you do, judge as you do, and equally bless God for it. If any here present enjoy not yet that happiness, may the Example and Motives of this Saint's Conversion prevail with him. Let him weigh whether he be not unhappily under the same prejudices this Saint was so long preposseſd with. 'Tis in vain to consult many Books or Persons on each point of Belief: "Alas! says the Saint, taught by twenty years "experience, the helps of all sorts of Instructions received from Man avail little, if God work not in us that "very effect which we expect from them. Seek, then, Knowledge from God by a devout and humble Prayer, but expect not that he should give you a new Revelation, or lead you to Truth, but by those Guides his admirable Providence hath provided for you. Resolve your Faith finally into God's Word; but that you may not be deceived, hear it from the Mouth, receive it by the Authority of that Church you are commanded to hearken unto. Thus did this holy Doctor, offering to those Heretics, who questioned the Grounds of his Faith, these evident Marks by which God hath character'd his Church, that Pillar of Truth on which all the Faithful are to lean. If any stubbornly refuse to observe them, they will allow me however to offer them to the Catholic part of my Auditory for their comfort. This is then the account he gives of his own and our Faith: "Many things do most justly draw me in the Bosom of the Catholic Church, First, the Union in Faith, and consent of many Nations. 'Tis the common misery of all Heretics not to see what of all things in the world is most patent, and seated in the very eyes of all Nations, to wit the Church; out of the Unity

De Doctrina Ch.  
c. 16.

In Epiſt. Fund.  
Cap. 4, &c. 5.

Fo. 3. 17. contra  
Patern. c. 3.

" whereof, whatever they do, can no more cover their  
 " Souls from the anger of God, than a Cobweb could pre-  
 " serve their Bodies from cold. That Church which eve-  
 " ry-where opposing different Heresies, can never be con-  
 " quered by them. They all went out of Her, like unto  
 " so many withered Branches cut off from, and cast out  
 " of the Vine, whil'st She remains in her own Vine, ad-  
 "hering to her own Root, enjoying her Charity, or per-  
 " fect Union. In her alone we hold the Inheritance of  
 " Christ (all Nations : ) They have it not whose Commu-  
 " nion unites not the *whole Circle of the Earth*; who is not  
 " in Communion with that Inheritance, is gone out of it :  
 " Such may challenge Christ, but to as little purpose as he  
 " who in the Gospel made this address to him ; Say, O  
 " Lord, to my Brother, that he divide the Inheritance  
 " with me : Christ refused to divide it amongst them.  
 " Paul was as great an Enemy to Division, when he said,  
 " I beg of you, Brethren, that you say all of you the same  
 " thing, and that there be no Schisms amongst you : He  
 " wept for those, who, tho' on his account, divided Christ.  
 " See then how wicked those men are who will be divided ! They  
 " think themselves witty, when seeing their Congrega-  
 " tion restrained within the bounds of some Province or  
 " Kingdom, they pretend that they be *a part of the Catho-*  
*" lic Church*, that hath all things commanded and necessa-  
*" ry for Salvation, as if to be a Catholic did not import a*  
*" Communion or Unity in Faith and Sacraments, in a*  
*" Church diffused the whole World over. They cut off a*  
*" part, and that again falls into many pieces, the' no ne-*  
*" cessary can warrant a rent from the Unity, tho' Christ's Gar-*  
*" ment was seamless, and fell to the Lot of one, because all*  
*" that belong to it are gathered into a perfect Unity : No,*  
*" the Catholic Church is but one ; it cannot be divided, nor*  
*" cut into different parts : And, Where is that Church ?*  
*" ought to be our sole Quare; for besides that One, there*  
*" is not another. It is in those good, faithful, and true*  
*" Servants of God, where-ever diffused, joyned not only*  
*" by a Spiritual Union, but in the same Communion of*  
*Sacra-*

I. de Symbolis  
cap. 5.

Tract. 3. In Ep.  
Joann.

Serm. de temp.  
169.

Brevic. contra  
Donatistas.  
Acutum aliquid  
fibi dicere video-  
tur cum Catholi-  
cæ nomen non ex  
totius Orbis com-  
muniione inter-  
pretantur, sed ob-  
servatione Prece-  
porum omnium.  
L. contra Parm.  
multa Fructu de  
Uno Fructu.

Ecclesia Catholica  
est una, non potest  
esse divisa nec  
scissa in diversas  
partes. Epist. 47.  
Dicendum est que-  
vel ubi sit una Ec-  
clesia quia præter  
unam altera non  
est. L. 1. cont. Don.

" Sacraments ; whereas all the Congregations, or rather  
 " Divisions , which call themselves Churches of Jesus  
 " Christ, and which are divided from, and opposite to one  
 " another, and Enemies to the Congregation of Unity, which spirituali unitate  
 " is the true Church, belong not to Her, tho' they bear her devindis in ea-  
 " Name ; they might belong to her if the Holy Ghost dem Communione  
 " were divided against himself. We may then say to each,  
 " If those of Our Communion be the Church of Christ, iuste of Sacramentorum de  
 " Yours be not the Church of Christ : For which-ever be the Bapt., contra Don.  
 " Church of Christ, 'tis but ONE, of which 'tis said, One I. 7. c. 51.  
 " is my Dove. I will then never hear those who lead to a si, &c.  
 " Division of Religions or Churches, saying Here is Christ, Serm. 11. de ver.  
 " and There is Christ. Secondly, I am kept in that Church by  
 " her Authority, grounded on Miracles, led by Hope, (that  
 " Hope which moves the Members of that Church to pur-  
 " chase Eternal Glory, promised as a Reward by our just  
 " Judge to meritorious Actions) increased by Charity.  
 Thirdly, because that Authority of Hers is back'd by her conti-  
 nuation and Antiquity ; all other Congregations having had  
 their decay long since, or their beginning so lately, that  
 their precise Age, the place of their Birth, the very names  
 of their Fathers, are known ; whil'st She, founded on the  
 Prince of the Apostles, with an infallible promise, That Matt. 16.]  
 the Gates of Hell shall never prevail against Her, That  
 Christ will ever dwell in Her, hath continued these seventeen  
 Ages defended from Error by him whose Sanctity and  
 Mercy could not otherwise have absolutely commanded us  
 to submit to her Direction, under the pain of belonging as  
 little to him as the very Heathens. Fourthly, by the Suc-  
 cession of Priests in the Seat of Peter to this present Bishop.  
 Behold the Title Roman, importing a continued Succession  
 of 244 Teachers legally sent from God, an Union with  
 the Pastor of the one only Flock, the Vicar of Christ ; whose  
 Authority is so Sacred, that in differences about Religion, when  
 he has past Sentence, the case is out of question, tho' the Error  
 continue ; so unerring, at least when that Voice of the Church  
 is owned by her representative Body, that if an Angel from  
 Heaven should require from us to abandon the Church in which  
 that

Romane responsio  
venerunt causa  
finita est actinam  
error finitari.

Fo. 7. in Psal.  
cont. para. Don.  
& To. 2. Ep. 164.

*that Succession is found, we ought to return him no other Answer  
but an Anathema. In fine, the very name of Catholic detains  
me in her Communion, &c. A Name She only hath ever owned!* Such was the Blessed Saint's Profession of Faith, a Record of Truth thirteen Ages old, and so plain and convincing, that he doubted not to address himself thus to the dilating Sectaries of his time: "Can we be unwilling  
"and slow to repair to the Bosom of that Church, which  
"hath ever been maintained in the height of an absolute Au-  
"thority, even by the general acknowledgment and consent  
"of all Mankind, by the continual Succession of Bishops  
"in the See Apostolic, against the opposition raised by so  
"great a number of Heresies, which have bark'd in vain  
"against her, and which have been condemned by the ana-  
"mous voice of Nations, by the Grace and Judicions  
"Censure of Councils, by the Glory and Majesty of Mi-  
"racles; so that not to yield to her Prerogative, is an  
"infallible Mark of an extreme Impiety, or a prodigious  
"Arrogancy.

Po. 6. de Utr.  
Grad. c. 17.

Let us return to *Augustin*. Grace hath gained a half Victory, the Battel is renewed hotter and more stubborn than before; he is convinced, but not converted; his Understanding yields, but his Heart revolts; that poor Heart was driven by contrary Winds: known Truth press'd him to profess it, his affection to some darling Sins, and to a fancied Reputation, held him back. "He deferr'd  
(as he owns) from day to day to live to God, whil'st  
without delay he died to himself. My Savior, (says he  
again) that is, the true way, pleased me, but it was  
narrow, and I had not strength enough to break into  
it.---I sighed after Liberty, but my Chains fell not off;  
those Iron Chains which my own will had made, and  
shackl'd me in, by which my Enemy held me fast.---My  
sinful Affections, weak in their beginnings, had been  
heightened into Passion; Passion yielded unto, was grown  
a Custom, Custom unresisted, was become an uncon-  
querable Necessity.---Two Wills, a newly-created one,  
the Off-spring of Grace, and my old sensual sinful one,  
streve

L. 7. Conf. c. 11.

L. 8. Conf. c. 11;  
& cap. 5.

" Broke the one against the other, and rent cruelly my  
 " martyr'd Soul. --- I now suffered with pain what I had  
 " wrought in my self with delight, and my sinful Will  
 " uncontrouled had led me further than I would, before, I  
 " coloured my backwardness in sacrificing my Vanities and  
 " Human concerns to those of Religion, with this excuse,  
 " that I waited but for a fair unquestionable discovery of  
 " the Truth ; and now that I had it in my sight, I found  
 " my self chained up, and even afraid that my Chains and  
 " Excuses should fall off together. --- My half-resolutions  
 " of rising and following you, my Lord, were like those  
 " of one half asleep : No one would be content to sleep  
 " always, all judge 'tis better to be awake, and up ; yet a  
 " drowsy head is loth to shake off a pleasant fit of sleep  
 " when the hour of rising calls : So it was with me ; I was  
 " convinced it was fit and just that I should yield to your  
 " Grace ; my Judgment pres'd me to it : but soft Plea-  
 " sures to be renounced, my Reputation to be blasted by  
 " my Enemies, my Sincerity to be questioned by my Friends,  
 " enslaved my Will. You clearly laid open before me that  
 " Truth which you invited me to avouch ; it was too plain  
 " to be disputed against : yet no answer could I return  
 " but those dull and drowsy words, Shortly, yea present-  
 " ly, leave me but a moment ; but that *presently* was ne-  
 " ver present, that *shortly* lasted long, that *moment* was  
 " eternal. Behold the sad Picture of a Soul that hath not  
 yet lost all pretence to eternal Blis, yet so dull'd by her sins,  
 so debauch'd by weak human fears, as to dare to stray from  
 the way to it, against the loud and clamorous convictions of  
 her own conscience. A sad case ! and at that time that of  
*Augustin*. Great God ! that Souls, created to possess an  
 Everlasting Blis, should be baffled out of all claim to it,  
 by such poor, childish, weak fears ! He was to *change*,  
 forsooth ! to alter his first Sentiment he had so often de-  
 clared to the World ! He, that Learned Man, was to lay  
 down his old Errors, to be catechiz'd, to learn (a little one  
 in Christ) the first Elements of Religion, to take up a new  
*Faith* ; what would the World say ? how sinistrously  
 would

Verba lenta &  
 sonnolenta, modo  
 ecce modo, sine  
 paululum, sed mo-  
 do & modo non  
 habebat modum,  
 & illud paululum  
 ibat in longum.

would they misrepresent his Motives? Weakness of men! who dare act against their conscience, lest the World should think they do. This misery the Saint reflected on afterwards, when he cried out, "A curse on thee, swelling River of human Respects! who shall bear up against thy Stream? who shall ford thee? what powerful Grace of God shall drain or dry thee up, and open me a passage?" God directed *Augustin* to a holy Bishop, *Sedulius*, who had been a Spiritual Guide and Father to St. *Ambrose*; by this Man's means God had designed to defeat this one great Difficulty at least, which was so dreadful an Obstacle to *Augustin's* Conversion. His Exhortations had long been ineffectual, when God inspired him to relate to *Augustin* the late Conversion of one *Victorinus*: You knew him at *Rome*, said the holy Bishop, you have often convers'd with him, and heard him both in the School and at the Bar; you know that for his eminent Parts and prodigious Rhetoric, he was highly valued, so far beyond all others, that *Rome* had raised him a Statue in the most eminent place of the City, as to the God of Eloquence: He was the Darling of the Nobility, the Glory of the Senate, the Love of the People, and wanted towards Happiness only (alas! the all indeed) true Religion. He was now far advanced in Age, when by reading all those Books that were written by those of the Catholic Church, God's Grace instructing him interiorly, he came to the knowledge of the Truth. But he was Head of a contrary Party, or at least the most considered in it. 'Twas hard to quit that sweet Prae-eminence, *and to have a new Interest to make*. He would often tell me, not in public, but in private and familiar discourse, That now he was converted, and of my Religion: I ever answered him, That he deceived himself, and that I should never rank him amongst those of it, till I saw him in their Church, at their Prayers, at their Sacraments. He would reply, That God knew his heart; and what, said he, do the Walls of a Church make one a Christian? This was but a fond excuse; alas he feared to offend his Friends; to cast a blur upon that fair

fair Reputation with them which he had gained to himself. God pitied him at last ; he apply'd himself to Reading again, and to fervent Prayer ; he inflamed his cold Desires, reinforced his Resolutions ; and, fearing not to be acknowledged by Christ before his holy Angels, in case he blushed to confess him before Men ; He (that great Master of the Literate World !) abandoned his old Errors, which almost all the *Roman* Nobility and People were again infected with ; and, tho' he knew that those tall Cedars of *Libanus* would fall heavy on him, that his Friends would forsake him, his Admirers ridicule him, his best Supporters abandon him, he did not blush to become a little one of Christ, *ashamed of his past Errors, and of the Truth he was to embrace* ; he suddenly, unexpectedly, declares to me, that he will go to a Catholic Church. With what joy did I lead him ! Thither come, he refused to be privately admitted into our Communion ; he made a public Profession of his Faith, calling the whole Multitude for Witnesses of the Mercy which God had shewed him. This Example thus related by the holy Bishop, Oh how powerful was it ! “I burnt, says *Augustin*, interjorly “with a violent desire suddenly to copy and follow it ; “I address'd my self to God in most fervent Prayers; Do, “O Lord, said I, do the same in my heart, awake and pull “it back to you. His Prayer was heard, human respects are totally laid aside by him, nay he is convinced that nothing but Error, or Weakness in not daring to disavow and to correct it, ought to be blushed at. One great point more God's Grace hath gained ; now we are come to the last. No wonder if the Enemy, intrenched in his last Fort, makes the most vigorous, because 'tis the last, resistance.

From the beginning of his Youth *Augustin* had found strange Charms (as he acknowledges himself) in Virtue, especially in that of Temperance and Chastity ; but corrupted Nature found stronger, and more tempting ones, in Vice. His Prayer was then, Lord, give me Temperance, Continency, Chastity, *but not too soon*. In this disposition had he continued till his Thirty-third year, convinced of

his Duty, but unwilling to comply yet with it. Catholic Religion he liked well of ; but with it the Cross of Christ was to be embraced, Abstinences, Penitential Works, Confession, Restitution, and Self-denial, Purity of Heart and Body, a removal of all dangerous occasions of sinning. "Oh (saith he) the Beauty of thy Law was to me greatly attractive ! but I sunk back with grief under my own weight, the violence of old sensual Customs.

*Qui intelligit Deum, & non accedit ad fidem ejus, ne vivat Christianus, sed in fine vult Fidem accipere ut moriarus Christianus, quem sperat Deum cui cum militare erubuerit vult ab eo stipendum accipere. Q. Q. ver. & nov. Q. 126.*

Oh of how many is this the case, when called by God to the true Church ; or, if in it already, to Christian Virtues ! But a sad one ! For, as *Augustin* himself observed afterwards, " Those who being sufficiently convinced when true Faith is taught, yet refuse to submit to it ; resolved not to live, yet hoping to die in it, can have but one of these two Motives of their delay ; either a greater liberty of sinning, with less restraint, with a weaker remorse, dusing Life ; or the confusion they apprehend to be put to by that change. But, alas ! what a God do they conceive you to be, O Lord, who blush to serve you, yet dare expect from you a reward ? The force of this Example had conquer'd in *Augustin* the difficulty he met with from human respects ; God uses the same to cure his last and inmost Wound, Sinful Customs. *Potinian*, a Noble African, and Friend of his, who followed the Emperor's Court, renders him a Visit, and finding S. Paul's Epistles opened in his Study, express'd the joy he had to see him bestow so well his best hours. Their conversation thus falling on a pious Subject, *Potinian* takes an occasion to rehearse the eminent Virtues practised, and the wonderful Miracles wrought, by S. *Anthony*, not long before deceased, and so famous thro' all the East, even whil'st living, that the Great *Theodosius* had often begged the Protection of his Prayers for his Empire and Army, and granted that he owed to them the Prosperity of the one, and the Victories of the other. *Augustin* wondred at the Greatness of those Miracles of so fresh a date, of so unquestionable a Truth, wrought in the true Faith in the Catholic Church, and stood amazed he had never observed, or even known them before.

*Tam recenti memoriâ, & prope nostris temporibus teatadissima mirabilia tua in fide recta & Catholica Ecclesia.*

fore. A great Motive to unite himself with it, in that Communion for which she had that Hand and Seal of God to shew. From this great Guide, and Father of solitary Eremits and devout Religious, the Discourse pass'd to his holy Followers, and the most flourishing Monasteries, and Religious Cloysters, which *Augustin* could not but acknowledge to be a peculiar Flock of Christ endued with singular Piety ; their Number and eminent Piety were a second Motive to embrace the Faith which they, such eminent Conquerors of the World, and exact Followers of Christ, did profess. *Poinian* finding him much moved, adds Fuel to this well-kindled Fire, by a relation of what he had been a witness of when the Court was at *Treves*. I went, said he, with three other Courtiers to view some neighboring Eremits Cells and Gardens ; the Company was divided, two entring a Cell, where dwelt some of those *Servants of God, poor in Spirit, to whom, by that claim, the Kingdom of Heaven belongs,* found on the Table S. *Anthony's* Life ; they opened and read it, and God representing by his interior Grace, in a far more lively way than the dead Letter could, the Virtues of his Servant, the one of them, an Agent in Court, inspired with a holy Love for Virtue, and ashamed of his so different a Life ; What drive our hopes at, says he ? What flatters most our wishes ? It is, that we may perhaps gain our Princes Favor ; 'tis but a *perhaps* ; many dangers will way-lay us before we reach it, and then that height is slippery, and threatens a sore bruise in the fall ; whereas in this very moment I may, if I will, enter into a particular Friendship and Intimacy with my God. Full of these thoughts, he recollects his discomposed mind, opens the Book again, and his heart at the same time to the Divine Seed of God's Grace, which took root presently, and the Fruit soon appeared : God altered interiourly the whole frame of his Soul, broke all his Chains, sever'd him from the World : He sighs, and reads, and sighs again ; he ballances, resolves, rises, and now God's Courtier : The strife is at an end, says he, 'adieu Court and World, none of my hopes are

now lodged in thee, 'tis God only I will serve ; 'tis resolved, and that at this hour, in this place ; and adieu Friend also, unless you have taken the same resolution. He had ; both rich enough, by that general resolution of sacrificing all to God, begun to build happily that Noble Tower of Christian Perfection. How surprized were we, when having but viewed some neighboring Gardens, we found them so altered in so short a time ! so fix'd in their new resolutions ! If we were not otherwise altered, having heard their Choice and their Motives, so far we were at least, as to weep for our weakness and insensibility. We did congratulate their happiness, envy their condition, crave their Prayers, and brought home with us a heavy heart, too too unseparably wedded to this World, whil'st those dwelt in Heaven, in Body in their narrow Cells. Whil'st *Potinian* related this pallage, what a storm was raised in *Augustin*'s breast ! who compared his wavering delays, with the firm resolutions ; his deafness to God's Voice, with the quick obedience of these his Servants. In vain he cast himself behind his own back, and turned away his eyes. God placed him still in his own light, and uncovered the old Sores of his lasting Sins. Not bearing with these interior reproaches, as soon as *Potinian* had left him, he betakes himself to a Garden to divert those thoughts : His intimate Friend *Alipius* followed him ; God's Graces pursue thither their Fugitive, and renew a brisk Attaque against that struggling heart. There, is exposed unto him, how certain he is now that 'tis God who calls and presses him to obey : He had nothing to answer, all his put-offs and excuses failed him ; a stubborn silence had succeeded, a strange fear seized him ; he apprehended more than Death to divest himself of those ill habits that poysoned his Soul to Death. In these violent Convulsions of his mind, he starts back towards his Friend, and seizing him, "What is this, *Alipius*? (says he,) What did we hear ?" "Unlearned illiterate people rise and seize on Heaven," and We with all our eminent Parts and Knowledge, for "want of Courage, behold we wallow in the sink of our sins.

Nihil mutari  
è primitus, neve-  
runt se ramen.

Remanserat muta  
trepidatio & qua-  
si mortem refor-  
midabat restringi  
à fluxo conuentu-  
dinis, quo tabe-  
cebat in mortem.  
*Conf. 1. 8. c. 8.*

"ems. Are we ashamed then to be men?  
"should we not rather blush to be men?  
"low, now they have opened their eyes,  
wandering eyes, his discomposed and pale countenance, and faltering voice. It  
mind. He was sinking into a swoon of  
ness, (as he calls it). He lay down, till he gave himself even to passion, to let that he could not resist, to make his peace with it. God had given him submission to his prevailing Graces, which the violence of his Soul violently led him to it, while his Will abandoned him, and withdrew. His Wounds could not resolve, 'twas but a half-will to live, while the other wounded half, still panting and a shivering back. His disordered Soul suffered strongly in this strife! He pluck'd the hair off his Head, knockt his forehead, his Forehead and Breast, with his hands, and clipt his Knees; then said, How easily all the parts of my Body obey my Soul! How they move at her Will, and my Soul cannot obey her own Commands! She would resolve, she asks with a more violent ravish that resolute solution from her self, yet cannot obtain it, 'Tis I my self that *would*, and I my self that *will not*. God's merciful Graces pursue him with quick restraints, by a fayre mixture of cruelty and tender cruelty, press him with shame, & with shame suggesting to him, That man was the *final moment* of man, Eternity depended, now his Choice were to be made, whether they were jacksoned, or never, to cast her off, & to fight them again. He strove, and laid to himself, Now be it now done; yet it was not done. Being now within one step of Peace of Mind, Joy, and Security, by a final Victory, he suffered in his Soul the most violent pangs; he fell not back, nor yet dared to advance. In this critical minute his ill Customs, those old Acquaintances, as he terms them, his past Vanities, sinful Pleasures, and now expiring Liberty, faintly pulling him, as by the Sleeve, said, And wilt thou quit us? from this moment, forever? And canst thou (thinkst thou) live with-

Imperat animus  
ut velit anima  
neccister ei, nec  
facta voces vo-  
muntur utrum  
picta imperat,  
ideo non ruitus  
imperat.

Plagella inge-  
nans timoris &  
pudoris, ne rufus  
cessarem & non  
abimpesceret id  
ipsum exponam &  
tenue quod re-  
maneret & ex-  
lesceret humanum &  
me robustus illi-  
garet.

without us? Ever hereafter under a constraint, ever checking, ever denying thy self? Grace, for a last supply offered to his thoughts the Example of so many Servants of God, even of the weaker Sex, of tender Years, who had sacrificed and suffered more to purchase Eternal Bliss.

Quid in te fias &  
non fias? projice  
te secum in eum,  
monile subfracte  
ut eam, projice  
te in eum, exca-  
piente, te lana-  
bit te.

" These and these could, said he, and thou canst not. Did God prevent them by his Grace co-operating with them; and art thou the only One whom God will abandon, returning to him? Why dost thou rely on thy own Strength, or fear thy own Weakness? Cast, cast thy self into his Arms who calls thee; he will not draw back, and let thee fall. Cast thy self into his Bosom; he will receive thee there, and cure thee. The Storm grew higher; two Showers of Tears followed, a sign that it was nigh clearing up. He could not bear the presence even of *Alipius*; alas, he could not brook his own! He runs under a Figtree, (with such Leaves *Adam* covered his Nakedness!) there prostrate on the ground, bathed in his Tears, he sobb'd and sigh'd, then gave vent to his grief in these broken words: "How long, my God, shall I be the Object of your Anger, the Butt of your Justice? When will the Ray of Mercy shine? How long shall I lay *to morrow, to morrow*? Why not now? Why not at this instant an end to my sinful life? *Amen*. Jesus sees thee under that Figtree, as well as he did *Cahaniel*, before thou seest him: His Mercy it is founds there so deep thy Wound, only that the Cure may be perfect; that hereafter, fruitful in Pious Deeds, thou mayst escape the Curse that fell on the barren Fig-tree. The happy moment is come, written in the Book of God's Mercy from all Eternity. A Voice is heard, *Take up and read, Take up and read*: He obeys, finding S. Paul's Epistles by him, he lights on the 13 Rom. 13. God guiding his hands and eyes there he reads, *Not in Feas-  
ings and Drunkenness, nor in Chamberings and Lechery,  
nor in Strife and Emulation; but put on our Lord Jesus  
Christ, and pamper not the Flesh, gratifying its Desires.*  
These

These words he had read often, but now a Ray of Grace writ the sense of them in his mind, and stamped them in his heart. In a moment a comfortable Light, breathing Security and Joy, spread it self into his Soul. His Tears were wiped off, his Doubts resolved, his Fears and his Anxiety vanished; he rose a S A I N T inflamed with the Love of God, begins his Apostolical Labors by inviting his Friend *Alipius* to a like zealous Conversion, who had been all the while a dumb Spectator, and who to shew the Riches and Varieties of God's Graces fitted to all Tempers, without reluctance, without strife or difficulty, surrendered himself at the reading only of the Sentence following in S. Paul, *Receive, and take him along with you, who is weak in Faith.*

*Infernum in Fide assumite.*

I should now open unto you, Christian Brethren, the Riches of God's Mercies heaped on this Saint; shew you his great steps towards an eminent Virtue, and the fulnes of the Reward that attended it, even here, by that serenity of mind, those interior Joys, which he often conceived to be of the same Nature with the Bliss of Saints in Heaven, and short of them only in Length. But my Glass is at the lowest ebb, my time expired. I shall trespass no longer on Your Sacred Majesty's Royal Patience. I will end with a transient consideration on the Fruit of this whole Discourse, which hangs on these three Truths. *First*, That we can do nothing without a continual supply of God's Grace, and therefore ought with assiduous Prayer to pres upon God's Bounty for it. *Secondly*, That Divine Grace once granted enables us to do all things, and that it is never denied when duly asked; whence it follows, that we ought without the least fear to undertake whatever God moves us unto. *Thirdly*, That Grace requires a speedy and diligent co-operation, or is soon withdrawn; and consequently, that nothing is so dangerous in the great concerns of our Eternal Salvation, as delays, on whatever account.

*Numquid hoc ac-  
cessit inter in gaudi-  
um Domini talis  
C. m. l. 9.*

No certainty, nothing available to Virtues here, or Happiness hereafter, can be had without the help of Grace. S. *Augustin* is a plain Instance for it: Twenty years continual endeavors, a studious application of so many eminent Parts, the Tears of a pious loving Mother, the endeavors of the ablest Divines of Europe and Africa, could not help him to see an almost self-evident Truth, what way of Worship God hath appointed us to honor him by, and where those means lie which his Mercy hath allowed us, to attain that Bliss we are created for. This Truth being laid open, his Will passionately moving him to declare himself of the Catholic Church, he had not yet the strength to raise it to a Resolution. Oh how truly are all the *Crowns of God's Saints, the Works of his Mercy, and his Commis-sion on our Weakness!* How truly are all the Merits we can boast of, God's mere Gifts! His own sad experience did teach S. *Augustin* how to express this Truth so fully, so admirably, in his Book of Widows. To will, faith he, is certainly our own Work, if it be true of any thing, it is certainly so of our Will, that 'tis such because we will; and yet what little influence have we over our own Wills, relating to good! It must be awaked and stirr'd, or it lies as in a Lethargy; when awake, it must be healed and strengthened, or the least difficulty and pain overcomes it; when applied, it must be encouraged, enlarged, supported, or it is so very narrow, so feeble, that it links after the first offers, under the least weight; and even when we think our selves most resolv'd, most forward, after even many endeavors, we find our hearts very empty of all Virtues, if God hath not himself mercifully placed them there. How long do some continue in Error and in Sin? A constant Object of Gods Hatred and Justice, on the very brim of Hell, unconcerned, and without any sense of their danger! Ah! Gods Grace hath not awakened yet their dull Conscience, lull'd in the sleep of Sin. How many others behold

*Qui coronat te  
in misericordia &  
clementiabus  
tuus.*

*Si vobis  
vobis.*

*Nostrum est vel-  
le, sed voluntas  
ipsa & adponetur  
ut fungar, & fa-  
ciamur ut valer,  
& dilatetur ut ca-  
pient, & imple-  
tur, ut habeat.  
De fidei.*

behold their own Misery, and sigh often for it, acknowledge themselves equally criminal and miserable, see themselves sinking deeper and deeper, yet never offer resolutely to release their Souls from, and avoid, those partly incumbent, partly threatening miseries. Alas! they have consumed the Substance and Vigor of their Sons in Sin; those many deep Wounds have impaired their Strength; God's Grace, which only can, hath not yet wrought the cure. How many, in fine, after their Sins are pardoned, and they set in a right way, stumble at the first difficulty, and advance no further; or with little sense, ever full of good Wishes, and empty of Effects? Their narrow and poorly-stock'd Hearts, conceive but little, know less how to improve it, till God by his Grace enlarge and enrich them. Oh then let us ever poor "ever coast, and may this Grace be all we ask! Let us ever seek, but this Grace only; having ever in our hearts and mouths that frequent Prayer of the Church, *O God, be intent on my help! Lord, hasten to succour me!*

But again, for our comfort, that help being obtained, with what security may we not attempt the greatest things! with what ease may we not perform them! S. *An-gustin* in that happy moment of his Conversion wondred from what dark Den, in which it had been so long locked up from him, his Free-will was restored; such unusual strength he found in himself! It proved a satisfaction, a comfort to him, to want those Pleasures without which he had believed he could not live. How unerringly, through the course of his following Life, did he practise those Virtues whose Names had been unknown to him! 'Tis with Truth you mind us, Great S. *Paul*, That 'tis God works in us both to will and to do; so little-toil and pain is found in the performance, when God's Grace works in us a steady fix'd Resolution: And can we give place to any Anguishess, Fears, Apprehensions, when God offers his Grace by calling us to a true Faith, to a pious Life? His Infinite Mercy is then at-hand to create

*De quo imo altogz;  
secreto evocatum  
est in momento  
liberum arbitrium  
mum? 1.9. c. 1.*

*Qui operatur in  
nobis, & vello &  
perficiere.*

in us a Will, his Omnipotency to joyn to it a facility in obeying him. Who hath found a Treasure, forms generous Designs, dares undertake great things, conceives he shall easily remove any obstacle, because that he knows the force of Gold, which in a moment can supply all wants. God's Grace is his Treasure; 'tis the Riches of his Bounty, saith S. Paul; in a moment it gives Strength to the Weak, Knowledge to the Dull and Ignorant, Courage to the most Timerous. 'Tis true we

*Divitias bonitatis  
eius.*

*Jo. 15.  
Omnia possim in  
eo qui me com-  
fortat. Phil. 4.*

*Deus non est  
co-operator nisi  
tu es operator.*

*Aug.*

can do nothing without God, but 'tis equally true that we can do all things in him that enables us all. We can despise the soft deluding Pleasures of sense, with the Virgins; blot out whatever stains of past sins, by our Tears, with God's penitent Servants; practise with ease all Christian Virtues, with the Consolators; undergo and conquer all sorts of Sufferings for Justice, with the Martyrs. But then let us ever remember that Sentence of S. Augustin, God cannot work with us, but when we work our selves. If Grace be God's hand ever stretched to help us, and work with us; if a Divine Light, able to disperse the greatest Darkness; if a Heavenly Science, expoed to no Error, infused in those who admit of it; if it be an easie conquest of all Vices, and of whatever Opposition to Virtue when used; if it be that with the help whereof all good Saints came to be such. Oh, Christian Brother, what a Treasure hath laid so long hidden in thy heart! and how useless yet! That Grace is the whole Fruit of the Cross of Jesus, thy plentiful effectual Redemption; to neglect it is as deep an Offence as to tread under foot the precious Blood of our Redeemer. Ah! dig up that Treasure then, stir it up, use that Talent, or it will be taken away. How long God will permit it to lie dormant in your hands I know not. He gives it not lavishly, but according to the measure of Christ's Gifts. How soon yours will be filled I know not. If now you hear your self called, answere; if moved, follow; if commanded, obey. Some one Grace, I know, is the cri-

*Secundum men-  
tiram donationis  
Christi. Eph. 4.*

critical one to each mans Salvation ; such were those *Samuel* offered to *Saul*, *Nathan* to *David*; the former past by his, and was set aside for ever, an abandoned Reprobate ; the latter obeyed his, and became according to God's heart. Whether this day by my voice God hath not presented to some one here the critical Grace, the last loud call, I know not; but this I know, that whoever obeys not his, whoever resolves it not from this moment, ventures his Salvation upon a *perhaps*, than which there cannot be a more certain Folly, scarce a more crying Sin. Use then all that measure which God hath offered you, and your Fidelity will be blest by such an increase of it, as will possess you with a Heavenly Blis, which God in his Mercy grant us all without end.

*Gratiam invenias  
mus in auxilio  
opportuno. Heb.  
4. 16.*

*Ad majorem Dei Gloriam.*

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*F I N I S.*